over them, with a view both to protect public interests and to safe-guard the rights o the people, who by an exercise of their intellect and intelligence contribute to the literary and scientific productions of their country. Following this rule, Regulation II of 1039 was passed by this Government for protecting copy-right in books. But since the date of that enactment, the number both of publications and presses has vastly increased, and above two years ago, the then District Magistrate of Trivandrum, now unfortunately no more, pointed out the necessity of enacting a Regulation on the lines of the British Indian Act XXV of 1867. Careful inquiries have shown that the necessity pointed out really exists. And there also exists the necessity for controlling in some form the circulation of periodicals. I beg, therefore, to apply for permission to introduce, at a future meeting, a Bill on the lines of Acts XXV of 1867, III of 1882, X of 1890 and the British Post Office Act.

Permission was granted accordingly.

## THE LEPERS BILL.

Mr. Thanu Pillai.—The question of passing a law relating to lepers, on the lines of Act III of 1898 of British India, has been engaging the attention of His Highness' Government for some time past. Recently, the matter was prominently brought to notice by the President of the Town Improvement Committee, Alleppey, who forwarded draft of a Bill and copy of a resolution of the Committee, strongly urging the need for legislation. The measure recommended by the Committee was intended to apply to the whole country and to all persons suffering from any form of the disease. Such a sweeping measure seems neither expedient nor necessary. The Council is probably aware that the death or rather the martyrdom of Fr. Damien at Molokai in 1889 led to the appointment of an Indian Leprosy Commission which, after a patient and thorough investigation, arrived at the conclusion that leprosy is not diffused by hereditary transmission, but is contagious and inoculable, though "the extent to which it is propagated by these means is exceedingly small." It was the opinion of the Commission that there is very little danger of propagation by contagion unless the disease has reached the stage of ulceration, and that there is no need for legislative interference in rural areas where the patients live, scattered about the country. But the Commission found that there was a tendency for mendicant lepers to crowd into towns and trade on their infirmities in the public streets and bazaars. I think our own experience would bear out this observation, as we can hardly pass through the streets in the important towns without noticing some helpless lepers covered with ulcers soliciting or extorting alms. The presence of these unfortunates, sometimes in large numbers, in the public streets in crowded centres of population constitutes a menace to public health, letting alone the annoyance which the general public are put to.

The Bill I now seek to place before the Council has been prepared with due regard to the above considerations. The term 'leper' has been defined so as to bring within its meaning only persons in whom the disease has reached the stage of ulceration and the local application of the Bill is limited to specified urban areas. Even within these limited areas, the Bill does not contemplate any interference with individual liberty except in cases which clearly constitute a public nuisance or source of public danger. The Bill provides for the compulsory removal to an asylum of only mendicant and vagrant lepers. In regard to others, it merely prohibits them from following certain occupations which concern the food, drink and clothing of the people generally. Ample safe-guards have been provided to prevent the measure being turned into an engine of oppression by the Police.

I shall reserve my further observations on the Bill to a later stage. I trust the Council is satisfied as to the expediency of the measure and will give me permission to introduce it.

Permission was granted accordingly.

## PUBLIC CONVEYANCES BILL.

Mr. Thanu Pillai.—I beg to move that the Public Conveyances Bill, as amended by the Select Committee, be taken into consideration.

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